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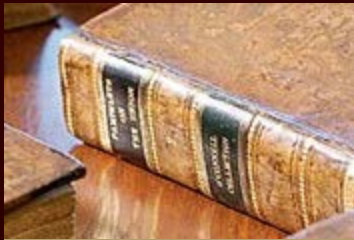


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Immigration Law Clinic Wins Asylum Case

4/01/02--Boston College Law Professor Daniel Kanstroom has announced that the BC Law Immigration Clinic recently won asylum for a Coptic Christian man who fled Egypt some ten years ago. The victory was not an easy one, as many reported asylum cases involving Coptic Christians have been denied due to difficulties of proof and the fact that such persecution is not official national government policy.

"This is truly great news," said Professor Kanstroom. "Our client's case was lost in the immigration service bureaucracy when we took it over and, after years of work, more than two full interviews, many briefs, piles and piles of background documentation, and much more, Mr. Y- and his wife have finally been granted asylum in the United States."

Kanstroom reports that the man and his family had been systematically persecuted: threatened, robbed, beaten, and harassed in ways subtle and obvious by a network of radical religious extremists who, sometimes with the acquiescence of local government officials, have succeeded in decimating the Coptic Christian community in Egypt through years of intimidation, violence, coerced conversions, and forced emigration.

"Many students have worked with me on this case over the years, including Jennifer Smith '99, Jennifer Norris '99, Peter Farah '01, Bryan Olson '01, Alison Kane, and Mehtap Cehver. There is no greater feeling as a lawyer, as a teacher, and I would say as a person, than to win an asylum case, and I deeply appreciate the collegial and institutional support our program has received in making this work possible."

Kanstroom also reports that, in recent years, students working under his supervision and that of Adj. Lecturer Sarah Ignatius have also won asylum for clients with equally compelling claims, including:

- a Rwandan woman who was raped and one of whose sons died in a refugee camp. (The BC Law students working on that case were Kristen Kenney and Lara Ewens)
- a Ugandan woman who was intimidated and threatened with physical harm after her husband uncovered a corruption scandal involving high government officials and went into hiding. (Christine Leonard)
- an Albanian man who fled with his wife after he had been arrested and beaten for his political activities in support of democracy. (Ramzi Abadou and William Ryan)

The Boston College Law School's Immigration and Asylum Project allows students to handle political asylum cases with direct faculty supervision and also to work with pro-bono attorneys in conjunction with the Political Asylum/Immigration Representation Project (PAIR). Students also interview, counsel, and represent clients in INS detention facilities and Immigration Court, under the supervision of a Fellow/staff attorney funded in part by the law school and in part by the Catholic Legal Immigration Network and the Jesuit Refugee Service.

